

WHAT THE SOLDIER THINKS

A Monthly Digest of War Department Studies on the Attitudes of American Troops

~~Classification Control~~



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By D. D. B.

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WAR DEPARTMENT,

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SOME MORALE PROBLEMS OVERSEAS

Source: Study of a cross-section of recent overseas returnees interviewed at Redistribution Stations in the U.S.

Veterans newly returned to the U.S. after extensive foreign duty, bring with them a vivid impression of problems which troubled them overseas. This impression sticks even after they have been furloughed home--and are ostensibly far removed from these problems.

The enlisted men who were interviewed for this survey had been returned from combat and service units in virtually every overseas theater, active and inactive. Most of them were home on rotation after having been gone two years or more. Looking back, one-third to one-half of all returnees were critical of practices and policies in the following areas:

- I. Promotion Practices
- II. Replacement Depots
- III. Officer Privileges
- IV. Rotation Abuses

I. PROMOTION PRACTICES

An officer's promotion policy--and its reverse, his "busting" policy--are twin weapons he can use to build confidence in his own leadership. When either policy is abused, when undeserving men are promoted and deserving men kept in grade, when there is no consistency in the busting of noncoms for violations--men's confidence in his leadership is undermined.

The morale importance of promotions is clearly indicated in the following quote from FM 21-50, par. 31:

"Since the manner in which promotions are made gives the company a good occasion to pass on the judgment of the company commander, it is important that you never permit yourself to be deceived by false pretenses of any sort."

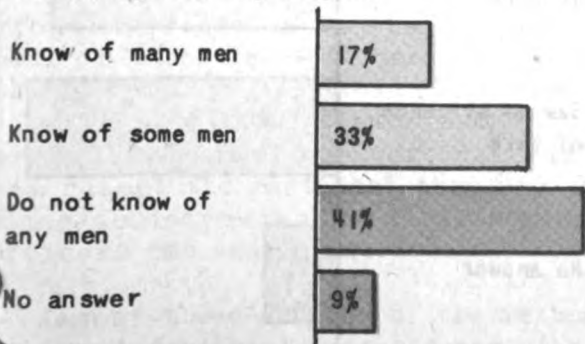
As the charts below show, as many as half the overseas returnees say they

RETURNEES' CRITICISMS OF PROMOTION PRACTICES OVERSEAS

"MEN PROMOTED WHO SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN..."

QUESTION: "Do you know of any men in your overseas area who got promotions when they did not deserve them?"

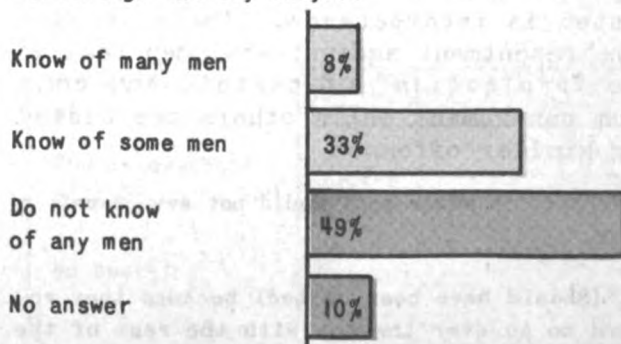
Percentage who say they...



"MEN NOT BUSTED WHO SHOULD HAVE BEEN..."

QUESTION: "Do you know of any men in your overseas area who were not busted when they should have been?"

Percentage who say they...



knew of cases overseas where undeserving men were promoted. Two-fifths of them say they knew of cases where men were not busted when they should have been.

When soldiers see a man upgraded because of what they interpret as "*apple-polishing*" or "*influence*," they are quick to show resentment. This resentment is evident in the following quotations:

"The first sergeant's best friends who hand-shaked around got all the promotions."

"Too many cliques--promote on one's ability and not on friendship as was done. Men were given priority through religion and race."

Complaints are also lodged against the practice of passing over old men in the outfit and giving ratings to recently arrived replacements.

"Some of our old men had been through two campaigns, did very good work, received nothing. A replacement arrived and received a promotion in four months."

"One good case was when one W/Sgt. made his brother a non-com just after he had come into the company as a replacement ahead of men who had seen action in a previous battle."

Criticisms of this type highlight the need for avoiding even the appearance of prejudice in the promotion of enlisted men. Another series of comments made by returnees emphasizes the importance of fairness and objectivity in the *busting* of men.

Incompetence...

In mentioning instances of this nature, the most frequent reason men give why they believe non-coms deserve to be busted is *incompetence*. There is also some resentment against what men feel is the "*protection*" of certain non-coms from punishment while others are busted for similar offenses.

"W/Sgt. in motor pool could not even repair a truck."

"(Should have been busted) because they refused to go over the top with the rest of the men. Not doing their job when we were in action."

"Because other men in the same outfit were busted for the same reasons. Partiality is too great in many units."

Some busted who should not have been...

A less common observation, but one made by one-third of the returnees, is that some men were busted without legitimate cause.

"For the simple reason a friend of mine told the truth to an officer and the officer didn't like it."

"For breaking minor Army regulations. For not getting a hair cut. For not saluting at a proper distance. For staying too long at the Post barber shop."

II. REPLACEMENT DEPOTS

Enroute from their overseas theater to the States, some returnees were processed through Replacement Depots. Some of the men had also had previous experience with Replacement Depots as they had originally come overseas as replacements. Looking back at these establishments, a large proportion of returnees rate them as "*poorly run*." More than two-fifths of the men are critical of the living conditions, efficiency, assignment methods and other aspects of the replacement system in their theaters.

QUESTION: "Did you see any evidence in your overseas area that the replacement depots were poorly run?"

Percentage of returnees who say they. . .

Saw evidence of this

43%

Saw no evidence of this

46%

No answer

11

"We slept in tents that leaked and they were all of mud and the food was terrible."

"Three thousand or more men eating in one mess hall and not enough for half that amount."

"No system of any kind. Very poor handling of men and routine duties. Definite failure to get information down to men resulting in a great deal of confusion."

"Sanitation was terrible and mess halls filthy. No laundry facilities."

"Trained men sent to outfits that didn't need them while outfits that were short remained so."

"Many men who should have made limited service did not and were sent back to combat duty."

"Men were sent to the infantry that never had infantry training and didn't even know how to load an M1 rifle."

"Men with specialized training were placed in units which needed men at that time. Mechanics, became medics, etc."

Gripes about details and over-strict discipline during the waiting period at Replacement Depots are also common.

"Men with 12 to 14 months actual combat were forced to go on long road marches."

"Too many details. No chance to rest."

"Base personnel mistreating returning troops, threatening delay on rotation plan if orders not obeyed strictly."

III. OFFICER PRIVILEGES

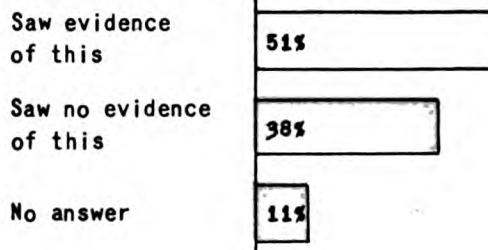
A common source of enlisted men's grouching overseas is the privileges--real or otherwise--officers seem to have which they themselves do not. They are sensitive to any evidence that officers are pulling rank for personal reasons and resent the fact that they are sometimes denied recreation facilities which officers can and do get.

Almost three-fourths of the returning veterans say they saw evidence of offi-

PULLING RANK...

QUESTION: "Did you see any evidence that officers in your overseas area took unfair advantage of their rank and privileges?"

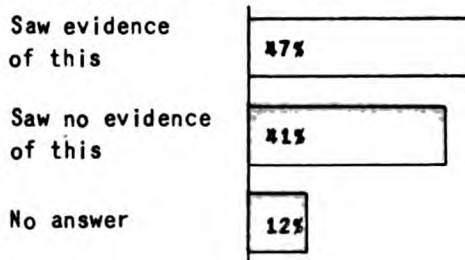
Percentage who say they...



HOTELS, RESTAURANTS...

QUESTION: "Were any good hotels, restaurants or entertainment spots in your overseas area put 'off limits' to enlisted men but not to officers?"

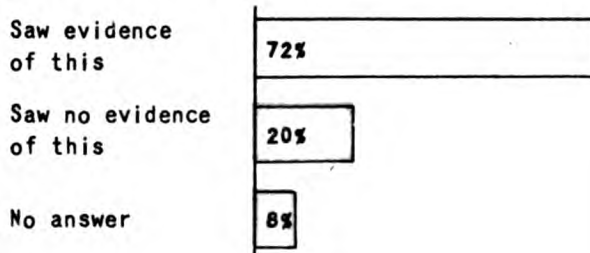
Percentage who say they...



ARMY VEHICLES...

QUESTION: "Did you see any evidence in your overseas area that officers made a practice of using Army cars and vehicles for their own personal recreation?"

Percentage who say they...



cers using GI vehicles for personal recreation. No other officer "privilege" is singled out by so high a percentage of men for criticism. The gist of enlisted men's complaints on this score runs something like this: "If officers can do it, why can't we?"

"Government vehicles if they are to be used for personal recreation should be made available to all men."

"If they could get jeeps and command cars to go out on dates, why couldn't the enlisted men? If E.M. were caught they were court martialed."

Rank-pulling for personal advantage

Roughly one-half the returnees say they saw evidence of officers using their rank to unfair advantage.

"Officers made men build them dugouts before they had any kind of protection for themselves."

"Getting better food at mess hall and eating it in front of us."

Other "officer privilege" complaints

Other "abuses" of privileges on the part of officers deal largely with recreation. It is not always necessary that the abuses be real for morale problems to arise in the individual command. If men *think* they are real, the morale effect is much the same.

As in the two abuses complained about above, the company-grade officer can do much to convince his men that he is not taking advantage of his privileged position to have more comfort than his men. In combat, a fine camaraderie often develops between officers and men which makes any outfit a better fighting and working unit. This spirit is often dissipated, however, when outfits return to rear areas and men become bitter about these "abuses" of privilege by their officers.

Little things--such as making entertainment spots off limits to EM and not to officers--carry a lot of weight.

"Any place that was decent and catered to the finer type of woman was always for officer only."

Men often become jealous of the fact that officers seem to have less difficulty in getting dates with women.

"They could have jeeps to take them so naturally the women, that is nurses and WACs, would rather ride than walk."

"They are able to get out of camp more often and return at their own pleasure."

In all the above matters, there is much the company officer can do to reduce discontent simply by avoiding such abuses in his own conduct. And though he himself is certainly not to blame for certain advantages he may have in the matter of places to go and things to do, it is obvious that he should never flaunt such advantages before his men.

IV. ROTATION PROBLEMS

The present study reinforces the belief brought out by previous research studies as to the tremendous concern felt by overseas soldiers about the operation of the Rotation Plan. Among the returnees, fully four out of ten say that the operation of the plan in their particular area was "messed up or delayed."

Their criticisms of the rotation plan's operation in their areas tend to revolve about the following points:

1. Complaints about delays in getting men rotated.

2. Complaints about unfairness in selecting men to be rotated. (See charts on the following page).

It is significant that the above points are *not* related to overall rotation policy but to policy within the individual unit. They are things the company officer *can do something about*--either through direct action aimed at correcting any errors in selecting men for rotation or

through orientation designed to explain the more puzzling aspects of rotation to the men.

Typical comments:

"Men on May quota not sent back until October. No reason given for this delay."

"I was four months late myself. I was put on different quotas, my hopes were shattered...even after waiting 2½ years for a chance to get a furlough or rotation."

Particularly bitter about postponements are men for whom every day of delay in rotation means another day of risking their lives in combat.

"I was delayed...we went into combat during that time and several who wrote they were coming home were killed in action."

"Men who were on quotas to be home four or five months ago were dying every day because of messed up plans."

Unsatisfactory Reasons...

Some of the men are inclined to scoff at the reasons given for rotation delays.

"Why did men wait for boats to go to the States for three months when they were using these same ships to take German POW's over?"

"They just said there was no transportation but yet they have room to bring Australian wives back..."

Unfair selection...discrimination...

Criticisms of the methods sometimes used to select men for rotation were frequently made by the returnees. More than one-third of them said they knew of men who were unjustly deprived of the chance to go home because of discrimination and favoritism on the part of their officers.

"The old men's names in our outfit were just put on the list according to how the commanding officer wanted them, so naturally there were some that were on the inside."

"Too much favoritism for the officers' pets. Sergeants got first preference."

Strangely enough, some men criticized the rotation system in their outfits because they felt the system was being employed to get rid of misfits while holding onto the men with the best records.

RETURNEES' CRITICISMS OF THE ROTATION PLAN

"MESSED-UP, DELAYED..."

QUESTION: "Did you see any evidence in your overseas area that the Rotation Plan was messed up or delayed in any way?"

Percentage of returnees who say they. . . .

Saw evidence of this

40%

Saw no evidence of this

48%

No answer

12%

"NOT GIVEN FAIR CHANCE..."

QUESTION: "Do you know of any men in your overseas areas who were not given a fair chance for rotation back to the States?"

Percentage of returnees who say they. . . .

Saw evidence of this

35%

Saw no evidence of this

56%

No Answer

9%

"Because company commanders didn't like the men...they sent the worst fellows home first."

"If a fellow was good in combat they would hold him."

So-called discrimination between outfits regarding rotation also comes in for a share of criticism...

"In the Division they should all have the same chance. Some fellows in non-combat outfits with 24 months overseas are coming home and other outfits with over 30 months are still there."

"Our officers disapproved of sending men back to the States. Our quota was held up while other outfits were leaving."

"Rear area outfits were two months ahead of combat troops."

"Send Combat Soldiers Home First..."

One section of opinion holds that certain groups are rightfully entitled to preference in fixing the order of men to be rotated.

"Men who have never been in the hospital have been sent home long before men who have seen combat and have been very sick."

"Send the combat soldier home. Men who were

shot two or three times are still fighting and that's wrong believe me."

There is some evidence that in certain outfits CO's have used withdrawal of the rotation privilege as a form of punishment. Several of the returnees quote examples of men whose names were taken off rotation lists because of minor disciplinary infractions.

"Some men were held back because they had petty company punishment against them, such as being out of uniform and other such things."

"One man was set back several months because he did not have his leggins on to a show one nite."

A FINAL NOTE

The data in this report are based on the responses of men from several overseas areas and do not show the *differences* between these areas. Certain problems are more prevalent in some areas than they are in others and many officers will readily recognize just how their own overseas theater fits into the composite picture presented here.

It should not be forgotten, however, that all of the problems discussed above were found to be troublesome in *all* theaters.

"MORALITY" OF STAR TROUPE SHOWS

The charge has been made, to the accompaniment of much publicity, that some of the traveling shows playing to soldier audiences overseas have been found morally objectionable by the men.

This charge is not borne out by a recent survey in one foreign theater. Of all the enlisted men who have seen these movie star troupes, only about one percent classed any single show as "too dirty."

Far from viewing the performances as a threat to their moral standards, the most frequent complaint of men is that

they don't get to see these units often enough. Soldiers stationed at small, outlying posts are more likely to make this comment than are men at the larger installations.

"Try to get some of the entertainment that comes overseas to some of the smaller bases," one Pfc. writes.

"Why should every entertainment unit sent over here from the states show (at theater headquarters) and some bases never get them. Spread the entertainment around more and not have every show at the same places." (S/Sgt.)

WHAT RETURNED MEN SAY ABOUT THEIR NEW JOBS

Source: Study of a representative sample of overseas returnees assigned to Engineer and Quartermaster units in the U. S.

To the soldier overseas, a chance to return to the States is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

As the war progresses, more and more GI's will be earning the chance to dip into that pot of gold and return to the U. S. for furlough and reassignment.

For the company officer in the States, the steady -- if slow -- increase in the number of men being returned to assignments in the Z. of I. is a matter of considerable importance. For returned personnel commonly encounter certain job assignment problems which, if not ironed out to the satisfaction of the returnee and the Army both, can result in serious damage to their own and their outfit's morale.

Once the returned soldier has had his furlough, his main Army concern is to land an assignment he likes. Glad as he is to get back home, he is likely to become unhappy with his lot if the job he gets is one which he finds unimportant or unfitting to his ability and training.

LARGE NUMBERS LOOK UNFAVORABLY ON THEIR JOBS

That large numbers of returnees are not satisfied with their new assignments in the States is evident from a glance at the charts on the following pages which indicate the job attitudes of a sample of returnees assigned to Engineer and Quartermaster units.

Stated briefly, those returnees who may be classed as unfavorably disposed

toward their jobs are more likely than other men to say:

"Much of the work I do is unnecessary."

"My job doesn't give me much of a chance to use my skill and experience."

Following is an analysis of some of the factors underlying the unfavorable job attitudes of large numbers of returnees:

**"THE ARMY DID A POOR JOB
OF PLACING ME"**

It is obvious that every returnee cannot possibly be assigned to the job he likes best or for which he is best trained. Yet it is significant that about *half* the returnees studied in the present survey feel that better assignments could and should have been found for them.

(In this connection, it is interesting to note that over a fourth of the returnees claim that whatever reason the Army may have had for placing them where they are that reason was not explained to them in any way.)

**"MY OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE IS NOT
BEING PUT TO USE"**

The attitude embodied in this statement is expressed by a majority of the returnees surveyed. These men state that few or none of them are being given assignments in which their overseas backgrounds will be useful.

In their own words:

"It would seem," writes a returnee assigned

to a Q M unit, "that overseas men trained for two years in a job ought to be (assigned to it in the States). If it is not possible to assign them in their own branch it should be explained to them. By personal knowledge I know men of other services being assigned to hospitals against their choice while medical men were indiscriminately sent to other branches. This creates resentment."

This same sentiment is echoed by a S/Sgt. who was returned home 18 months before the survey was made to help activate a new baking company. When interviewed he was still awaiting an assignment with the Engineers to whom he had been sent.

"I have been transferred so many times (13) in one year here...that I feel today that I am not actually needed anywhere. Since I came back I never seen a bakery or had the chance to help activate the company I came back for."

A private reassigned to the Engineers expresses the helpless feeling of the returnee who is dissatisfied with his job and can do nothing about it:

"I went to the company commander and told him I wasn't suited for that part which I have and that I was fitted for something else. But he told me he was putting me where he wanted and I have no choice."

"I HAVE NO CHANCE FOR PROMOTION IN MY NEW ASSIGNMENT"

The returnee is also likely to feel that his present assignment is a blind alley as far as promotions are concerned. Nearly two men in three questioned on this point say they do not see much chance ahead for additional stripes -- and this despite the fact that fully 40 percent of them are privates and pfc's.

An Engineer corporal, returned from 29 months in the Aleutians and in grade 19 months, voices a common complaint:

"I'm only a Corporal and I had to fight my way up with my own efforts. I've been a good guy for 3½ yrs, never turned in or over the hill. I don't know if they keep records of that or not

but I do know it don't seem to help. I just got a good conduct medal last month."

Another Engineer (pfc) adds:

"Upon our return to the states we were re-organized and it gave us a bunch of new ratings but the men who had faithfully worked as Pvt.

HOW RETURNEES RA

QUESTION: "How do you feel about the importance of the work you are doing right now as compared with other jobs you might be doing in the Army?"

Percentage who say...

Important as any
other job I could do

29%

Fairly important, but
I could do more
important work

28%

Hardly seems
important at all

38%

No answer

5

QUESTION: "How good a job do you think the Army did in placing you in your present job?"

Percentage of assigned men who say...

Very good

18%

Fairly good

35%

Rather poor

17%

Very poor

30%

and Pfc. didn't have a chance as a bunch of dremen with ratings who have never served outside the U.S. was moved into our outfit."

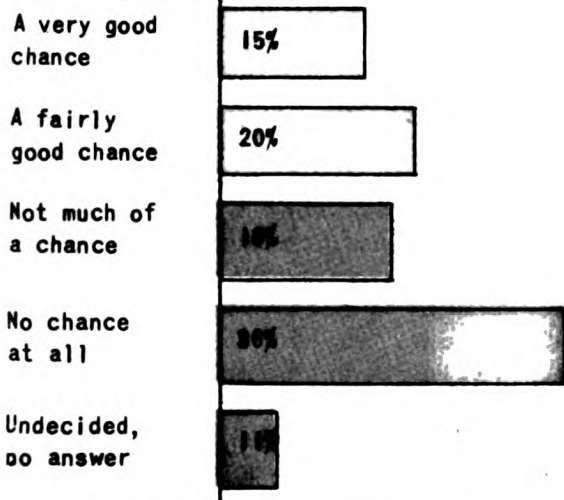
**"I WAS ASSIGNED TO A POST
TOO FAR FROM HOME"**

Many of the returnees are upset at

THEIR NEW JOBS

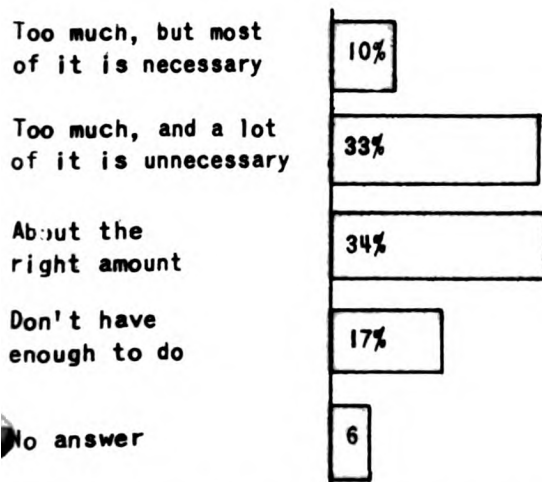
QUESTION: "Does the Army job you now have give you a chance to use your skill and experience?"

Percentage who say...



QUESTION: "How do you feel about the amount of work you have to do?"

Percentage who say...



being stationed in camps which they feel are needlessly distant from their homes. Why, they want to know, does the Army send them so far from their families when "it could just as well assign them to posts closer to home"?

This grievance elicits more complaints from returnees than any other subject. The importance which the men attach to their location is emphasized by the fact that more than half the men say they would even welcome a job they disliked if it took them nearer home. Roughly half of them also say that at one time or another during the reassignment process they were "officially" promised a berth at a camp near home.

Typical comments on the subject:

"Was told every possible effort would be made to get me close to home and this is not true. Some were sent close to my home who did not want to go there and yet I was sent 1200 miles from home."

(S/Sgt. Engineers)

"Most of the fellows from this outfit live on the East Coast and spent 29 months overseas. They bring us back and put us 3000 miles away from home."

(Pvt. Engineers)

"I am very dissatisfied so far from home. It could be just as important at a post 11 miles from my home as I am here. My wife wants a divorce because she never gets to see me."

"Is the state of Washington the closest possible place to Cincinnati, O? I'm almost 300 miles from home!"

**"Z.I.'s HAVE THE BETTER JOBS
IN MY OUTFIT"**

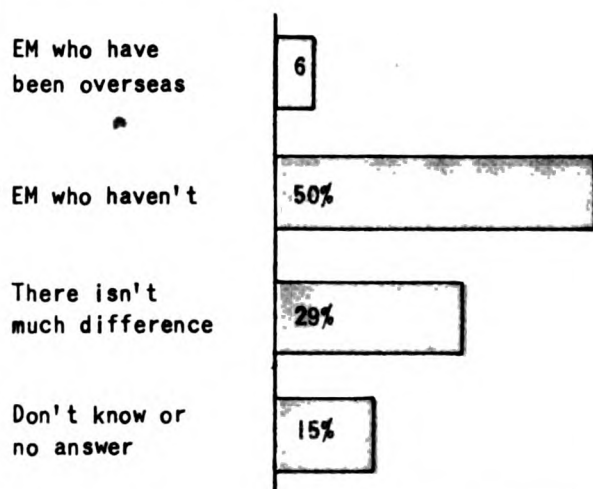
The returnee's discontent is heightened if he looks about him and sees evidence that the men in his outfit who have never been overseas are holding down what he considers to be the most desirable jobs.

Half of the returnees studied hold

this point of view. This attitude is even held by two-fifths of the returnees in outfits where half or more of the non-coms are themselves returnees. Though even those men who are satisfied with their own job assignments often think that Z.I.'s get the best jobs, the belief is much more prevalent among returnees who are not satisfied with their jobs.

QUESTION: "Who have the better jobs in your outfit -- enlisted men who have been overseas or those who haven't?"

Percentage who say...



**"I'VE DONE MY SHARE AND
SHOULD BE DISCHARGED"**

The attitude expressed in this statement is not uncommon among men returned from combat or long service overseas. It is shared by a majority of both the Engineer and Quartermaster troops in the survey. There is little doubt that the prevalence of this attitude has been affected by the fact that large numbers are fundamentally unhappy at their work, and feel they are contributing very little and therefore should be released.

All of the above findings point out the seriousness of the job assignment problems plaguing returnees and their officers alike.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

What the company officer can do to alleviate job dissatisfaction in his outfit is limited, of course, by the kinds of jobs he has available for assignment. Within such limits, however, he can make a real contribution to the morale of his men and to their efficiency as soldiers if he tackles their assignment problems realistically.

Certainly, he can make sure to become acquainted with the talents and training backgrounds of every man in his outfit. He can do this by making a careful study of his men's service records and by interviewing each man personally before and after assignment.

There will always be cases where men in individual outfits are assigned to jobs which do not fit their training and ability as well as they might ideally. In cases of extreme job dissatisfaction, arising out of glaring misassignments, the C.O. can do a real service by doing all in his power to aid the misassigned E.M. in getting a transfer to an outfit which can use his talents. Again if he feels that a member of his outfit is eligible for discharge, he can help such a soldier obtain it. Even if such outlets are closed to him, however, there is much good which can be accomplished by calling in improperly assigned men and explaining to them just why they were given the assignments they have. A little orientation in such instances can go a long way toward insuring confidence and good will.

Underlying many of the unfavorable attitudes described in this report is the fact that many returnees lack understanding of various aspects of the current military situation -- particularly as it relates to the need for certain kinds of personnel. There is no substitute for straight-from-the-shoulder orientation for dealing with attitudes arising out of enlisted men's misconceptions.

USE OF HALAZONE TABLETS

Some men are neglecting to purify water obtained from questionable sources

Source: Survey of selected samples of combat and service troops overseas.

Halazone tablets issued by the Army to troops in overseas theaters are a safeguard against infection from local water facilities. By using these tablets men can safely fill their canteens from almost any source of water they come across.

From the nature of the responses made to a recent questionnaire, however, it is clear that many men are in need of further information regarding the properties of Halazone. To illustrate -- as many as one-fourth of the men surveyed admit drinking from open wells or streams without first purifying the water with tablets. In view of the serious hazards involved, medical officers feel that the extent of this practice is indeed cause for concern.

Failure to make use of Halazone tablets may be traced to such factors as

the moderate chlorine taste of treated water, and to the 30-minute interval which must be allowed for the tablets to act.

Except in the case of extreme pollution, as the statement below points out, Halazone is a proven method of purification. The Surgeon General therefore recommends that all troops be thoroughly trained in its use:

"Before recommending the adoption of Halazone tablets for canteen sterilization, The Surgeon General's Office investigated every promising sterilizing agent. On the basis of many scientific tests, Halazone was adopted as being effective in the destruction of disease-causing organisms and as being least objectionable as regards tastes and odors. It is possible that the lack of a strong chlorine taste, which many associate with effectiveness, may be a reason why some soldiers do not have full faith in the ability of these tablets to safeguard the water; or perhaps troops have not been sufficiently well instructed by the unit commanders in regard to Halazone.

"The numerous tests to which Halazone was subjected show that it is effective under all reasonable conditions but it will not sterilize sewage or similarly very heavily contaminated water. Therefore, troops should be trained to select suitable water sources, so far as possible, and to use extreme measures, as boiling, when nothing but such highly polluted water sources are available."

THE SURGEON GENERAL

QUESTION: "Since being in (this theater) have you ever drunk water from an open well or stream without using Halazone tablets in it?"

Percentage who say. . . .

"NO"

72%

"YES"

24%

No
answer

4

IMPROVING THE ORIENTATION PROGRAM

A considerable minority of men are critical of the way Orientation meetings are run in their outfits

Source: Questionnaire survey of a representative cross-section of enlisted men in an overseas Air Service Area Command.

Orientation has won an established place in the military training program. In sessions at Zone of Interior camps, and within sound of enemy artillery in combat areas, Orientation is bringing to troops a keener realization of their stake in the war and the peace, conditioning them mentally for the fighting ahead.

There is solid agreement among enlisted personnel about the importance of the objectives of the Orientation Program. Almost to a man they say these objectives are vital.

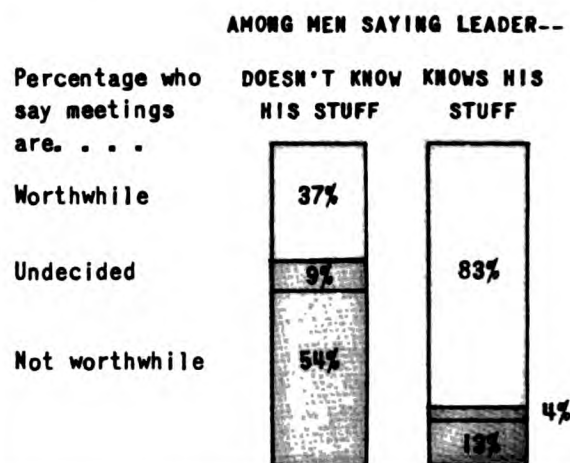
But men are not nearly as unanimous in endorsing the Orientation setup in their own outfits. Three out of every ten say these meetings are "not worthwhile" or are undecided about their merit. The conclusion is that these men are not so much critical of Orientation per se as they are of the way their own Orientation meetings are conducted. As evidence of this, the following data may be cited:

Where Orientation meetings are usually run on what troops consider an interesting level, practically all the men are impressed with their value.

Where the Orientation leader, in the opinion of his listeners, "seldom or never knows his stuff," a clear majority of the men dismiss the meetings as "not worthwhile."

Clearly apparent in the above picture is the close relationship between attitudes toward Orientation and the quality of unit programs. An immediate problem in this connection is how to raise these programs to a higher plane of interest.

QUESTION: "Do you think that such Orientation meetings as these are worthwhile?"



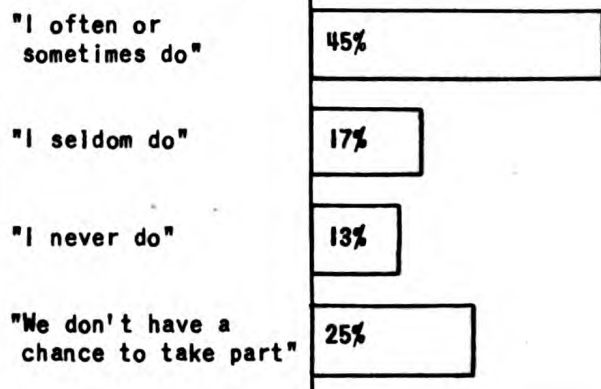
One device which deserves wider consideration is the group discussion plan. A recent publication of the Army Orientation Branch calls this practice "the most effective method of achieving the purposes of Orientation." One-fourth of the troops in this sample report that they are not given a chance to take a direct part in their meetings. When the men do have an opportunity to share in discussion, however, fully three-fifths of them "sometimes" or "often" get up to express their own views.

Dissatisfaction with cut-and-dried lectures which do not permit enlisted men to "speak their piece" is evident in comments such as these:

"Leave a chance after the meetings to make sure everything is understood by everyone and allow for the expression of opinions. Then perhaps these meetings wouldn't be so dull."

QUESTION: "If the men have a chance to talk and give their own opinions, do you usually take part and give your opinion?"

Percentage who say...



"The usual everyday offer of some poorly informed second lieutenant when he says 'Any questions, men?' doesn't deserve to be called discussion, and for my money that ought to be the best part of the meeting."

TECHNIQUES FOR LEADING DISCUSSION

The Army Orientation Branch has compiled a list of techniques for leading a profitable discussion period. A few of these pointers are listed in the adjoining box.

In the course of the survey, the men were asked "What could be done to improve these meetings or the way they are run?" Topping all other suggestions is the demand for better qualified Orientation leaders, who should be well-informed, good speakers and fully prepared on their subjects.

"Get officers to do this who have been to school a lot, and learned public speaking too. If this isn't done the whole damn thing's a waste of time."

"Make sure the person giving the lecture has enough information on the subject to make it more interesting. If possible, have some officer or enlisted man freshly back from a combat area give a talk on how their battle training stood up under actual combat."

"Try to pick a man to lead the meetings that knows the subject well and not a last minute cram.- Guest speakers should be brought in and talk or discuss his topic."

In their desire to get the best Orientation leaders available, the men are largely unconcerned as to whether officers or enlisted men are selected. Less than a third of the men say they would rather have an officer, while fully half say "it makes no difference." As one soldier put it: "A man should be chosen on his background and his qualifications in this field, rather than his rank."

SOME HINTS ON LEADING A DISCUSSION GROUP

Make men as comfortable as possible without violating regulations.

Discussion will be more lively if the men have had advance notice of the topic.

The leader should be informal, relaxed, natural--should use customary language, not talk down to the group or use highbrow language.

He should recognize that frequently self expression is a better way of learning than listening. Let the group talk; leader listen.

Encourage questions by friendly comment. See that all views have a fair chance to be heard. Make sure that constructive thought receives clear expression.

Don't let the discussion just peter out. It is very helpful, from time to time, to summarize briefly the points of view expressed--and it is essential that a final summary be made at the end of the hour.

The group should go away feeling that something concrete has been accomplished.

(For additional hints see the January 1945 issue of "The Digest.")

ENLISTED MEN'S SAVING HABITS

A report on allotments, Soldiers' Deposits, and bond purchases

Source: Survey of a representative cross-section of enlisted men in an overseas theater.

Whatever dreams the soldier is weaving for his postwar career, the chances are they will involve some financial outlay. If he is looking forward to getting married, setting up house, going into business for himself or just "taking it easy" for a while--a "nest egg" will be a handy thing to tide him over the period of re-adjustment.

So that men will be better prepared for the eventual switch to civilian life, the Army is encouraging them to save as large a share as possible of their service pay now.

As an encouragement to thrift, the Army offers several different savings plans to the soldier who wants to set aside part of his earnings:*

Family Allowances (Class F Deductions)--Class E Allotments--Soldiers' Deposits--Personal Transfer Accounts--War Bonds.

Investigation of the savings habits of enlisted men in one overseas theater reveals that a number of troops are not making use of these various facilities. These men thus present a logical target for any savings program.

The extent to which personnel are availing themselves of each form of saving shows the following pattern:

CLASS E AND CLASS F

Roughly half the men sampled--presumably all men who are eligible--have signed up for Class F allowances. An

*Omitted from this report is National Service Life Insurance, already taken out by nearly all men.

equal number have signed up for the Class E allotments, under which plan the government makes no contribution.

Of the allotment money going to families in the States, some is consumed by the family and some finds its way into bank accounts. The soldier has no direct control over its ultimate disposition. But two out of three men say that the folks back home succeed in saving a part, if not all, of the money remitted.

SOLDIERS' DEPOSITS

A Soldiers' Deposit account with the Finance Office, drawing four percent interest, is a profitable form of G.I. investment. Despite the high rate of return, however, less than one-tenth of the men surveyed say they now bank any pay through this service.

Soldiers' Deposits have until recently been the least publicized form of savings, and this may partially explain

QUESTION: "Out of the cash money you get in your Army pay envelope each month, do you usually send any of it home?"

Percentage Who Say. . .

(Each symbol equals 10%)

Yes, every month



Yes, but not every month



No, don't send



(2% DID NOT ANSWER)

their relative lack of patronage. A frequent comment on this plan was "Don't know enough about this means of savings," to which some men added "Never even heard of it."

The fact that funds saved with the Finance Office may be withdrawn only for a good reason, and upon approval of the regimental commander or comparable officer, also accounts for some of the reluctance to join in this plan. "Not satisfied," one soldier wrote, "with the manner in which withdrawals can be made."

A question which asked the men their opinions on the "one best way" of saving discloses that the home town bank, named by more men than any other medium, remains the outstanding symbol of thrift in the eyes of soldiers. It is likely that this preference for banks can be converted into ammunition for the promotion of Soldiers' Deposits, which are the nearest thing to a civilian bank available to personnel in foreign theaters.

PERSONAL TRANSFER ACCOUNTS

Apart from automatic monthly deductions, most soldiers say they are in the

habit of sending a portion of their pay home. (See chart on preceding page.) These funds are generally forwarded by postal money order, very few men taking advantage of the Personal Transfer Accounts which the Army offers without charge.

Remittances of this kind, whether made by money order or PTA, lack the regularity of allotments and are therefore recommended by Finance Officers only for the disposal of "loose cash" or in case of emergencies.

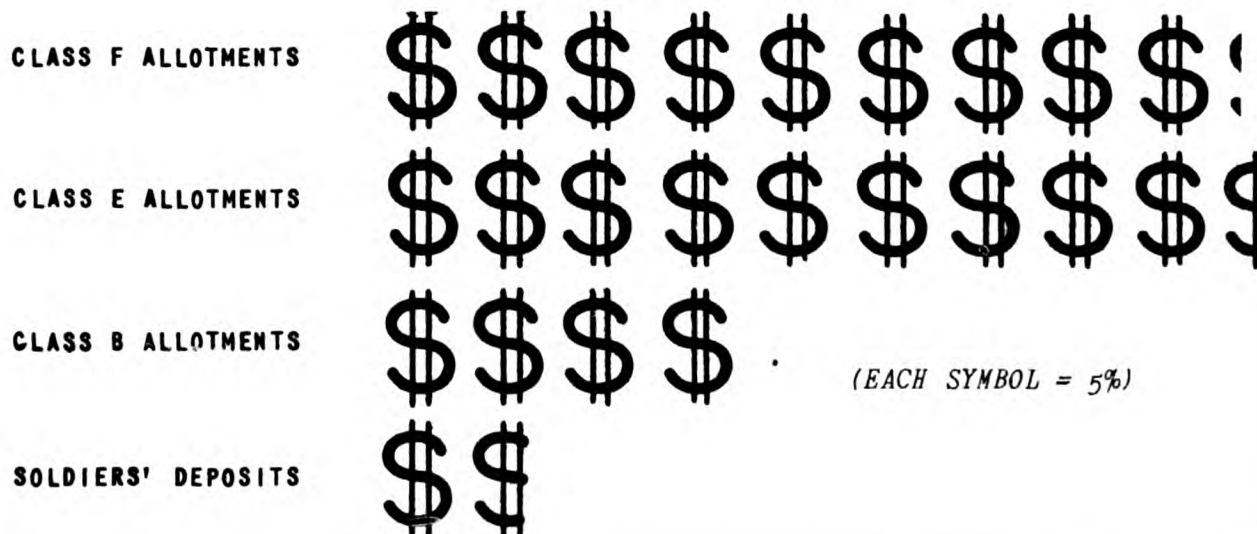
However, the fact that more than seven men in ten are able to mail money home in this manner may indicate that much can still be done to achieve a sharp increase in the size and quantity of allotments and deposits soldiers are now making.

WAR BONDS

Few men in the theater surveyed -- only one in five -- are purchasing war bonds through Class B Allotments. From the chart on the following page it appears that the percentage buying bonds was slightly higher under the previous arrangement whereby bonds could be bought by installment deductions.

PARTICIPATION IN SAVINGS PROGRAM

Percentage of men who say they have. . . .



Some men, displaying a certain amount of confusion about the new system of bond-buying, are puzzled by the change and seem unaware of the special ten dollar bond available to servicemen. Judging from their comments, these men do not have full knowledge of the present bond setup and are not being regularly solicited on behalf of G.I. bonds. Other men give the excuse that a minimum allotment of \$7.50 a month is more than a low ranking enlisted man can afford to take out of his pay.

A clear majority of troops in the theater admit they have not bought any bonds, either through allotments or any other method, since arriving overseas.

The men were asked for suggestions on stepping up the sale of bonds among soldiers. The question yielded a variety of ideas ranging from a special discount for servicemen to cutting the time required for delivery of paid-up bonds.

The most common plan put forward, however, was for the adoption of a "cash-and-deliver" basis of selling bonds, to supplement the present allotment procedure. Suggestions were advanced along the following lines:

Put a sales desk near the pay line so that a man with excess cash can buy a bond on the spot, receiving the bond or a receipt immediately.

Set aside a special day on which men can buy bonds from the Orderly Room, PX, Finance Office or Post Office.

Have bonds, or receipts for bonds, available at one or more of the above points at all times.

A broad field of activity for the unit savings officer is uncovered in this study. In his efforts to boost soldier savings he will receive strong support from the War Department Soldiers' Savings Campaign, under which a variety of educational and promotional material is being circulated to military installa-

tions. A review of the figures following throws the spotlight on some of the opportunities for widening the base of soldier participation in the savings program:

52% are not committed to Class F deductions.

21% have neither Class E nor Class F allotments.

77% are not allotting any money for bonds under the Class B plan.

56% have not bought a single bond since going overseas.

87% have not opened a Soldiers' Deposit account.

The importance of the unit savings officer's mission to the welfare of Army personnel may be seen in the twofold objectives of the Soldiers' Savings Program: *to encourage men and women in the service to provide for their future in the post-demobilization period by building a financial reserve; and to curb superfluous spending which might cause rising prices and hurt the economy of any country where our troops are stationed.*

QUESTION: "Since you have been in (this theater), what method have you usually used to buy War Bonds? Check the one method you have used most often"

Percentage who checked...

Allotment



Send money home for bonds



Send money order to Treasury

(Each symbol equals 10%)

Have not bought any bonds since coming here



No answer



HOW THE STUDIES ARE MADE

The articles in this bulletin are based on attitude surveys conducted by the Research Branch, Information and Education Division, and the research units reporting to the commanding generals of the several theaters.

The staff of the Research Branch is composed of Army officers who are experienced in the field of surveys, together with a number of civilian specialists. Techniques have been developed, tested and adjusted to fit the Army's problems.

The basic steps in conducting a study are as follows:

1. The questionnaire is prepared in consultation with the War Department branches, or the theater command immediately concerned. Questions are carefully chosen to provide the exact type of information desired.
2. The questionnaire is pre-tested. That is, the questions are tried out on small groups of men to determine whether they are meaningful and understandable to the type of men or officers to be studied.
3. The project is cleared for action with the commands in which the study is to be made.
4. The number of men to be surveyed is set sufficiently large to insure statistically reliable findings.
5. The men to be surveyed are selected to insure as true a cross section of the group to be studied as possible. A cross section of enlisted men in the United States, for example, is so drawn as to give proper proportionate representation to each branch of the Army, to men in each stage of training, and to men stationed in the various sections of the country. It is, of course, possible to get cross sections of a single branch, of a division, of Negro troops, or any other portion of the Army desired.
6. The men complete questionnaires under conditions of absolute anonymity. They are assembled in small groups, and hear a short introduction given by a specially trained class leader. This introduction makes it clear to the men that only their frank opinion is wanted, and that they are not being tested or spied on. If the group is composed of enlisted men, the class leader is an enlisted man, and no officers are present during the session. No names or serial numbers are placed on the questionnaires. Ordinarily, illiterates or men of very low intelligence are interviewed by specially trained enlisted men.
7. The data are analyzed by specialists in attitude research analysis. Reports of these analysts are released to agencies concerned, and also form the basis for the material presented in this bulletin.

The procedure outlined above is that followed in the typical cross section survey. Other techniques, of course, are employed from time to time in special situations.